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Senior Recital: Joy Dupuis, soprano

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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SENIOR RECITAL

Joy Dupuis, soprano

assisted by

Robert Cole, harpsichord
Joanne Kong, piano
Catherine Lofland, flute
Heather Stebbins, cello

March 25th, 2007, 3:00 PM
Perkinson Recital Hall

Psalm 104:33-34

I will sing to the Lord all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

May my meditation be pleasing to him,
as I rejoice in the Lord.

NOTES, TEXTS, TRANSLATIONS

Nel dolce del'oblio

George Frederic Handel

George Frederic Handel was a prolific composer – he wrote twenty-eight oratorios, forty-three operas, nearly one hundred secular cantatas, and numerous arias, duets, trios, and instrumental works. However, besides some of his major oratorios like *The Messiah* and a few well-known operas like *Agrippina*, most of his works were not uncovered or widely performed until the early twentieth century, almost two hundred years after his death. The Italian secular cantata *Nel dolce del'oblio* is one such work.

Handel's secular cantatas had no specific form unique to the genre as whole. Consequently, *Nel dolce del'oblio* has two recitatives and two arias. The recitatives recount the story of a restless lover who is parted from the one she loves, and the arias that follow each recitative express the lover's distress and grief over losing her love.

Gypsy Songs, Op. 55

Antonin Dvořák

Antonin Leopold Dvořák was an influential Czech composer in the nineteenth century. He wrote more than 100 solo songs and duets, and the melody and rhythms of his vocal compositions are closely connected with poetic rhythms of the texts he sets. Dvořák's vocal compositions are recognized for their unforced vocal lines and their dramatic nature. *Gypsy Songs, Opus 55*, composed in 1880, highlight the expressive range of emotions Dvořák illuminates in his music. This cycle focuses on different aspects of gypsy life: community, love, freedom, nature, music, and dancing. In *My Song of Love*, Dvořák uses the melody line to depict the lover's song boldly ringing through the woods. In addition, the piano accompaniment represents the lost, wandering lover. In *Here in the Wood* one can hear the singer's sighing heart in the melody line, while the piano accompaniment represents the wind whistling and gusting through the woods. *Songs as My Mother Sang Them* is the most well-known and heart-wrenching of Dvořák's songs for voice and piano. It tells a story from the perspective of an old woman who remembers the songs her mother taught her, and now, years after her mother's death, she finds herself teaching her own children the same songs. Lastly, *The Cliffs of Tatra* rounds out gypsy cycle. This text speaks directly to the unchained beauty of nature and the freedom that the gypsy life provides.

Fetes Galantes I and II

Claude Debussy

Fêtes Galantes I and *II* are excellent examples of Debussy's impressionist compositional artistry because he sets the atmosphere of each piece through unique rhythms and melodies in the vocal line and progressive harmonies and motivic material in the piano accompaniment. Debussy composed the first set of *Fêtes Galantes* in 1882, and then revised them in 1891 while living in Paris. Thirteen years later in 1904, Debussy composed *Fêtes Galantes II* as a tribute to his lover, Emma Bardac. The two sets of *Fêtes Galantes* reveal the evolution of Debussy's harmonies and compositional techniques during his career.

En sourdine demonstrates the subtle understatement that exists in Debussy music. Debussy draws on long stretches of single pitches to deliver lines of text. In a letter to Jacques Durand, Debussy wrote "I feel more and more that music, by its very essence, is not something that can flow inside a rigorous, traditional form. It consists of colours and of rhythmicised time." In *En sourdine*, Debussy encourages the listener to hear rhythm as an equal partner of the melody.



[REDACTED]

Fantôches is a humorous and naughty song that depicts the scandalous lives of puppeted commedia dell'arte characters. The piano accompaniment takes off at lightning speed with unexpected modulations and glissandos, while the vocalist is challenged to sing an acrobatic line, interrupted by vocalises on *la*. Through his music, Debussy illustrates the silliness of the marionettes as they rapidly disintegrate all moral codes.

[REDACTED]

In *Clair de lune*, Debussy sets Verlaine's melancholy love song beautifully by providing consistent rhythms in the piano accompaniment to support the flowing and melodic vocal line, thus highlighting Verlaine's text. Although chromaticism permeates the piece, Debussy delightfully composed major chords at key moments in the poem to enhance the meaning of the text.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In *Les Ingénus*, Debussy places the singer in her low tessitura, so that the text is given prominence and the act of singing becomes less important. Although Debussy is not one to be limited by tradition, here he reclaims the ancient French virtue of singing as being merely heightened speech. *Les Ingénus* allows the listener to be guided by the words of the poem, not by the melody line or regular rhythms, which keep the listener alert to the text.

[REDACTED]

Le Faune is an eerie depiction of the mythological Faun figure of half-horse, half-man, sitting as a terracotta statue in the middle of a field, watching and judging all who pass in front of him. The repetitive, gypsy-like piano accompaniment portrays the tambourines and dancers that the Faun is eyeing.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Colloque sentimental, a heart-wrenching conversation between two dead lovers, was composed at a significant crossroads in Debussy's life and is likely a reflection of Debussy's thoughts and feelings at that time. Just before Debussy set out to compose *Colloque*, he took a lover named Emma. A few months later, Debussy informed his faithful wife Lilly of the situation, and he clearly hinted that he and Lilly would get a divorce. Lilly attempted to commit suicide, shooting herself in her breast, but missing all her vital organs. The doctors were never able to remove the bullet from her, and she lived, divorced from Debussy, for another thirty years, with a bullet to remind her of her love for Debussy. *Colloque sentimental*, which is the last Verlaine poem Debussy set to music, can also be seen as Debussy's cold farewell to Lilly.

[REDACTED]

I Never Saw a Moor

Richard Pearson Thomas

Richard Pearson Thomas is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and the University of Southern California. He is a recognized composer of concert and theater music, and his works have been performed by celebrated ensembles like the Boston Pops, Chautauqua Opera, and the Riverside Philharmonic Orchestra. Currently, Mr. Thomas is composer-in-residence of the Gold Opera Project, where he has composed over 75 operas with students in the New York City public schools. He also serves as a coach and music director for the Aspen Summer Festival and the Yale School of Music.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Give me Jesus

Arranged by Moses Hogan

Moses Hogan is most celebrated as a choral arranger of traditional African-American spirituals. He received his musical education at New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts and from Oberlin Conservatory of Music as an accomplished concert pianist, but in the 1980s began investigating the choral music scene, and soon formed his own choirs called the Moses Hogan Singers and the New World Ensemble in hopes of preserving the spiritual tradition. Hogan's works have become standards for high school, college, community and church choirs, and Hogan is largely responsible for the continued interest in spirituals as part of the choral repertoire.



Zion's Walls

Aaron Copland

Aaron Copland was a prolific twentieth-century composer whose works display a distinctively American musical style. Copland composed operas, film and ballet scores, orchestral works, pieces for chamber ensembles and solo piano, and choral and solo vocal music. Although much of Copland's music is characterized by his experimentation in jazz and twelve tone frameworks, Copland wrote *Zion's Walls* during a period of his life during which he was fascinated by American folk music. Copland's melodies tend to be direct and vigorous, and contain frequent leaps and jumps with short musical motives that repeat often. His unique compositional style is clearly reflected in *Zion's Walls*. Furthermore, the lyrics to *Zion's Walls* reflect Copland's own Jewish heritage and beliefs.



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Thank you so much for joining me in celebration of four enriching years of singing and learning at University of Richmond. I'm thankful for the encouragement, wise guidance, and friendship with which you have blessed me, and I hope that my performance today is a reflection of God's grace and faithfulness in my life.